CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1   1.   A method for facilitating image retrieval, comprising the steps of:

2   querying a user as to at least one attribute of an image the user wishes to

3   retrieve;

4   receiving user responses; and

5   presenting at least one image to the user based upon the user response.

1   2.   The method of claim 1, wherein the step of querying a user comprises

2   posing a series of questions to the user and wherein the step of receiving the user

3   response comprises receiving separate responses to each posed question.

1   3.   The method of claim 2, wherein at least one of the successive questions

2   depends upon the user response given to a previous question.

1   4.   The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of eliminating

2   potential image matches in response to the received response.

1   5.   The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of prompting the

2   user to identify at least one image attribute.

1   6.   The method of claim 5, further comprising the step of storing an
2   attribute association as image metadata in response to a user response to the
3   prompting of the user.

1   7.   The method of claim 6, wherein the user response to the prompting
2   comprises direct user selection of at least one presented image.

1   8.   The method of claim 6, wherein the user response to the prompting
2   comprises user identification of at least one image attribute in at least one presented
3   image.

1   9.   The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of analyzing
2   images for a recognizable image attribute.

1   10.   The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of storing attribute
2   associations as image metadata based upon the analyzing of the images.

1   11.   An image retrieval system, comprising:
2   means for querying a user as to attributes of an image the user wishes to
3   retrieve;
4   means for receiving user responses; and
5   means for presenting images to the user based upon the user responses.

1   12.   The system of claim 11, further comprising means for prompting the

2   user to identify image attributes.

1   13.   The system of claim 12, further comprising means for storing an

2   attribute association as image metadata in response to a user response to the

3   prompting of the user.

1   14.   The system of claim 11, further comprising means for analyzing

2   images for a recognizable image attribute.

1   15.   The system of claim 14, further comprising means for storing attribute

2   associations as image metadata based upon the analyzing of the images.

1   16.   A computer program stored on a computer-readable medium,

2   comprising:

3   logic configured to generate questions for a user that are designed to elicit

4   responses as to attributes of an image the user wishes to retrieve;

5   logic configured to receive user responses; and

6   logic configured to determine which images may satisfy the user's retrieval

7   wishes.

1   17.   The program of claim 16, further comprising logic configured to

2   prompt the user to identify image attributes.

1   18.   The program of claim 17, further comprising logic configured to store

2   an attribute association as image metadata in response to a user response to the

3   prompting of the user.

1   19.   The program of claim 16, further comprising logic configured to

2   analyze images for a recognizable image attribute.

1   20.   The program of claim 19, further comprising logic configured to store

2   attribute associations as image metadata based upon the analyzing of the images.